

# ALA American Library Association

October 28, 2019

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch  
Office of the Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**In the Matter of:      Nomination for Universal Service Administrative Company  
Board of Directors**

**CC Docket Nos. 96-45, 97-21**

Dear Secretary Dortch,

The American Library Association (ALA) thanks Mr. Robert Bocher for his dedicated service as the library representative on the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Board of Directors. Mr. Bocher is not seeking reappointment to the Board and therefore, ALA respectfully nominates Ms. Amber Gregory for appointment to fill the library position. During her tenure at the Arkansas State Library, Ms. Gregory has developed the knowledge and experience necessary to represent the needs of libraries and to make a significant contribution to the USAC Board.

As Manager of E-rate Services for the Arkansas State Library, Ms. Gregory works directly with library applicants throughout the E-rate application process and is intimately familiar with the entire process. Her leadership has helped secure approximately \$1 million annually, including \$745,000 in Category 2 since FY2015 for Arkansas public libraries. This represents 130 eligible library locations and includes regional library systems as well as county and city library entities. Since Ms. Gregory became E-rate Manager, Arkansas libraries have increased the overall amount in funding requests and program participation increased from 47 percent to an average of 60 percent today. This is especially noteworthy given that Arkansas libraries are primarily small, rural and are less equipped to participate without significant support.

Ms. Gregory has a unique and critical local and national perspective of the E-rate program. Ms. Gregory conducts yearly regional trainings and provides one-on-one assistance throughout the application cycle on all the required forms and related actions. This experience has made her an invaluable member of ALA's E-rate Task Force since 2014, currently serving as Chair. The E-rate Task Force is made up of state level E-rate and broadband experts. The task force is the primary ALA member group that advises the association on E-rate policy positions and related issues before the FCC and Congress such as broadband mapping and rural broadband access. As Chair, Ms. Gregory coordinates outreach with state library E-rate staff, including requests from ALA for state

and local E-rate data, challenges local libraries have in participating in the E-rate program, and feedback on aspects of the E-rate Productivity Center and USAC applicant trainings and resources. Between her deep on-the-ground work with Arkansas libraries and her national leadership with E-rate, Ms. Gregory well understands both the programmatic details and the policy of the E-rate program.

Ms. Gregory has built a national reputation within the library community as a leader on E-rate, rural broadband, and digital inclusion issues and is being recognized outside of her home state. She has presented about broadband for libraries at the Association for Rural and Small Libraries and the New Mexico Library Association annual conferences. She led the Arkansas State Library's "Coding in Arkansas Public Libraries" initiative that builds on Governor Asa Hutchison's commitment to offer computer science in every school. This initiative is crucial in a state where many students still do not have access to robust broadband at home and it supports students' digital learning outside of the school day.

Ms. Gregory's ability to collaborate and high professional standards as well as her demonstrated innovative approaches to promoting learning, training, and leadership development will be a direct boon to the USAC Board and to E-rate applicants across the country. As the leading library association in the United States, ALA is confident that Ms. Gregory will be a strong Board representative for libraries that are eligible to receive discounts. She will provide the necessary leadership that ensures the integrity and continued success of the E-rate program in particular and the Universal Service Fund in general.

A copy of Ms. Gregory's professional biography is also filed in this docket. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Alan S. Inouye, Ph.D.  
Senior Director, Public Policy & Government Relations  
American Library Association